

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS SUNDAY 23 APRIL 2017

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

You may tune in to the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings, at 08:15 Central African Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Central African Time in English, on HF as well as on many VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. Echolink listeners may connect to ZS0JPL for a relay. A podcast is available from the League's web site.

This audio bulletin may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you will find this as well as previous bulletins in text format under the news link on the left-hand side of the web page. While you are there, you may sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news, today:

ZS4 SPRINT THIS AFTERNOON

AGM REGISTRATION EXTENDED

and

ARE YOU STILL LICENSED?

Stay tuned for more on these and other interesting news items.

** The ZS4 Sprint, which is a fun activity to promote contacts between radio amateurs in the Free State and radio amateurs in Southern African countries, will be on the air this afternoon from 14:00 to 16:00 UTC with phone activity between 14:00 and 15:00 and CW activity between 15:00 and 16:00 UTC. The exchange is a RS or RST report and your provincial or country abbreviation. ZS4 stations will give out a RS or RST report and their town name or abbreviation.

Contacts with stations in ZS4 are worth 2 points and contacts with stations in your own or other ZS call areas (excluding ZS4) or Southern African countries are worth 1 point. For ZS4, local contacts count 1 point and contacts outside ZS4 count 2 points. Contacts with the Bloemfontein ARC, ZS4BFN, the Vrystaat Radioklub, ZS4B, the Welkom Radio Club, ZS4WRC and the Sasolburg ARC, ZS4SRK are worth 5 points each. Stations may be worked once on SSB and again on CW during the allocated time slots.

Logs, in ADIF, Cabrillo or MS Excel format and labelled "your call sign ZS4 Sprint," must be sent by e-mail to the Sasolburg ARC by 1 May 2017, to zs4srk@gmail.com. A certificate will be awarded for first, second and third places in both categories.

** The South African Radio League National Convention which includes the Annual General Meeting and the Awards Dinner takes place at Bergvallei in

Muldersdrift just north of Johannesburg on Saturday 6 May 2017. The event is being hosted by the West Rand Amateur Radio Club.

The West Rand ARC has notified SARL News that the registration numbers are low and that the final date for registration has been changed to Wednesday 26 April. To secure your place, please e-mail admin@sarl.org.za or call Kelley at the SARL office on 011 675 2393 or Geoff, ZS6C, on 082 546 5546. Please note that your reservation is not effective until you have made payment in full.

If you cannot attend the AGM, please submit your proxy vote.

** At the quarterly SARL/ICASA Liaison meeting held this week, ICASA confirmed that 2 100 amateur radio licenses were cancelled for non-payment of licence fees. Over the past few months, the League has reminded radio amateurs in news bulletins, newscasts and on the web to ensure that their license payment are up to date. In December, last year the League sent e-mails to members who were in arrears and whose licenses were about to be cancelled. This week another 143 members were e-mailed again.

ICASA sends invoices at the beginning of each year but many do not reach their destination, often caused by licensees not updating their addresses. The regulations are clear that the responsibility to pay the annual fee is on the licensee and that ICASA is under no obligation to take responsibility for non-delivery of invoices.

To check if your license was cancelled call the League Office on 011 675 2393 between 09:00 and 12:00. If your licence was cancelled and you did make payment, please send copies of the payment to DKuhrau@icasa.org.za. If ICASA was at fault, they will reinstate the license. In all other cases, radio amateurs will have to reapply for a license.

** The closing date for your articles for the May issue of Radio ZS is Tuesday 25 April 2017. Send that article to radiozs@sarl.org.za and it will be in the May issue.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League. Have you told your friends about amateur radio?

** Long distances covered in South Africa on VHF and above. During the peak of the Solar Cycle, worldwide DX can be worked on 50 MHz (6 metres) around equinox time. TEP DX is possible between Europe and South Africa for most of the Solar Cycle before it also disappears. All these modes are seasonable and not very reliable. However, EME worldwide DX can be worked almost daily on VHF, UHF, SHF and EHF, whenever the Moon is visible and not too close to the Sun. This also applies to amateur satellites and the height of their orbits during low elevation passes when distances of about 8 000 km have been achieved.

There is one common mode present on the VHF, UHF and SHF bands, and success will depend on the efficiency of your equipment. It is Tropo Ducting

that could appear throughout the year, when weather conditions are favourable, and could create some very strong signals at times. The 144 MHz (2 metre) band is the most efficient on Tropo Ducting as the duct size normally favours this band. The current South African record stands at 3 247 km and the world record is close to 5 000 km and could be extended across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The RSA records for the bands above are: 432 MHz - 2 875 km, 1,3 GHz - 422 km, 2,3 GHz - 198 km, 5,7 GHz - 151 km, 10 GHz - 299 km and 24 GHz - 56 km. All the South African records can be improved a lot if someone who is dedicated would only take the trouble to do so. Radio astronomers discovered a long time ago that if you wish to pick up the weakest radio emissions from deep space then you need BIG antenna systems. Radio amateurs could learn from this and build high gain horizontal Yagis, especially for 144 MHz!

** Now for some beacon news. The 60 metre band licence, which was previously approved by ICASA, will be expiring soon, so there is renewed focus on logging reception reports from WSPR listeners on 5,290 MHz. This band is currently proving to be quite variable during certain times of the day and the more information we have the stronger our case to ICASA will be.

One interesting example of such an anomaly happened recently one morning around 05:20 UTC at the QTH of Ken, ZS6KN. He was busy receiving two stations which were both located around 60 km from him but they had vastly differing signal to noise ratios: ZS6SRL was received at +11 dB and ZS6GL was received at -14dB. That was a difference of 25dB at that moment!

What makes this a very interesting spot is that the huge difference in received signals could not be explained by the difference in power levels alone and that the propagation effects must have played a big role in the observations. Any amateurs who are interested in joining the team of SA Beaconeers in their support of this initiative, please contact Leon Uys, ZR6LU, on 082 573 5580.

** AWA Valve QSO Party Dates Revised. Due to the AGM being held on Saturday 6 May, the AWA Valve QSO Party in AM and SSB has been moved to Saturday 13 May for AM and Sunday 14 May for SSB. All other requirements as per the SARL Blue Book Remain.

** The Pretoria Amateur Radio Club will host their next boot sale on Saturday 29 April 2017 at their usual place at Pretoria Old Motor Club, in Keuning Street, Silverton. The starting time is 10:00 and the gates will open for sellers at 09:30. Our famous boerewors rolls and drinks will be available. Come and enjoy the morning with us. To book a table or to get more information, please contact Almero du Pisani on 083 938 8955 or send an email to almero@up.ac.za

** Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at low levels. Decaying sunspot AR2651 is relatively stable with only a minor chance for solar flares. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around thirteen. The 15 to 30 m bands will provide lots of DX fun. With the effect of the equinox still lingering the 10 m band will also hold some surprises on sunlit paths in the

early afternoons. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

** And now for the diary of events:

This afternoon the ZS4 Sprint 25 April closing date for articles for Radio ZS 29 April - PARC Boot sale at Pretoria Old Motor Club 6 May - The South African Radio League National Convention 13 and 14 May the AWA AM and SSB QSO Party 20 May Radio Amateur Examination 21 May ZS3 Sprint 25 May closing date for the June Radio ZS 28 May - SARL Digital Contest

** To end this bulletin, a recap of our main news item this morning:

The ZS4 Sprint, which is a fun activity to promote contacts between radio amateurs in the Free State and radio amateurs in Southern African countries, will be on the air this afternoon from 14:00 to 16:00 UTC with phone activity between 14:00 and 15:00 and CW activity between 15:00 and 16:00 UTC. The exchange is a RS or RST report and your provincial or country abbreviation. ZS4 stations will give out a RS or RST report and their town name or abbreviation.

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio magazine programme 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The programme can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 3 230 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, edited by Dave Reece, ZS1DFR, and read by

73 and 88, thank you for listening

/EX